

Director's Report

February 3, 2022

VR went back to remote work which will likely be extended to the end of February with exceptions being made for people who need in-person appointments.

On the financial front, VR is in great shape, and we are in the position to implement innovative projects and will be able to continue funding Pathways—services specifically for consumers with chronic mental illness—into next year. We look forward to continuing our exciting work.

We are getting more experience with paid training and work experiences and learned early on that a shorter term of four weeks of paid experience with the possibility of renewal for an additional four weeks makes the most sense. But we are seeing that paid training is a game changer.

The Summer Career Exploration Program (SCEP) held its kickoff meeting last week and there is lots of excitement. We are already reviewing students and caseloads to identify candidates for the upcoming year and recently finished our SCEP how-to manual which incorporates lessons learned and feedback from field staff who participated in the inaugural program last summer. We served 150 students last year through 110 employers. VR is currently awaiting approval from Joint Fiscal Committee and the Governor's office to accept innovation fund grant money which was awarded in late September. In the interim, Rich Tulikangas is working on the Vermont Career Advancement Project implementation plan. It's some of the most exciting systems change work we've done in the last few decades.

Our rebranding initiative is underway, and we have rolled out our internal communications plan and held community meetings for youth and adult community partners and have been getting overwhelmingly positive feedback.

And finally, VR's last federal audit from Rehabilitation Services Administration was in 2013 so we have been selected for a weeklong monitoring visit which will take place in May. VR is already working on pulling together advanced documentation, including large amounts of data from our AWARE system. It will likely include conversations with SRC members and we will share information as we have it.

Be safe and stay well. Diane